



12 October 2020



Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act Request

You have asked for information about gender affirming healthcare services.

Could you please advise whether the following gender-affirming healthcare services are funded by this DHB for transgender patients, and whether the services are currently available:

- Hormone therapy
- Mastectomy
- Hysterectomy
- Orchidectomy
- Facial hair removal
- Breast augmentation
- Voice training

The following services are offered: hormone therapy, mastectomy (via Breast Clinic referral to the Plastic Surgery Unit at Counties Manukau DHB), hysterectomy, orchidectomy, breast augmentation (via Breast Clinic referral to the Plastic Surgery Unit at Counties Manukau DHB) and voice training.

Could you please provide information about the process of accessing those services that are available?

- *Specifically, is an assessment by a mental health professional required in order to access gender-affirming healthcare services? If so, which services?*

Individuals wishing to access gender affirming services are generally referred through primary care providers. Northland DHB follows the guidelines set by the Ministry of Health. The guidelines are available on the Ministry's website (www.moh.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/delivering-health-services-transgender-people/gender-reassignment-surgery).

Assessments are undertaken by a multidisciplinary team. This may include assessment by a mental health professional.

- In the case of hormone therapy, can primary health providers prescribe hormones, or does this have to be initially approved by an endocrinologist?

Primary health providers are able to prescribe hormone therapy but generally do so after specialist consultation.

- Is any period of real life experience required to access surgery?

Yes; generally 1-2 years minimum real life experience is required to access surgery.

- *could you please advise what the process is if transgender patients require one of the above services, but the DHB does not offer this service? Does the DHB currently fund patients to travel to other areas to access this healthcare?*

Patients have been referred to the Ministry of Health waiting list for gender reassignment surgery. Information on publicly funded gender reassignment surgery is available on the Ministry of Health's website: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/delivering-health-services-transgender-people/updates-gender-affirming-genital-surgery-service>.

Northland residents who are referred to a tertiary level service eg Counties Manukau DHB as noted above, are funded if they are eligible to receive publicly funded healthcare.

Northland DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist public understanding of how we deliver our services. This includes proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been provided to you. Personal or identifying information will be redacted from any response published online. If you consider there are good reasons why this response should not be publicly available we will consider your views.

If you have any questions regarding Northland DHB's response to your information request please contact Liz Inch, Communications Manager, in the first instance. Liz can be contacted by e-mail at communications@northlanddhb.org.nz, by telephone on (09) 430 4100 ext 60518 or 021 730 543.

Yours sincerely



Dr Nick Chamberlain
Chief Executive